

Stevens

Ohio State Medical Society.

ANNUAL ADDRESS

OF THE

RETIRING PRESIDENT,

EDWARD B. STEVENS, M. D.

Prof. of Materia Medica in Miami Medical College of Cincinnati.

CINCINNATI:

A. ABRAHAM, PRINT, 118 WEST FOURTH STREET.

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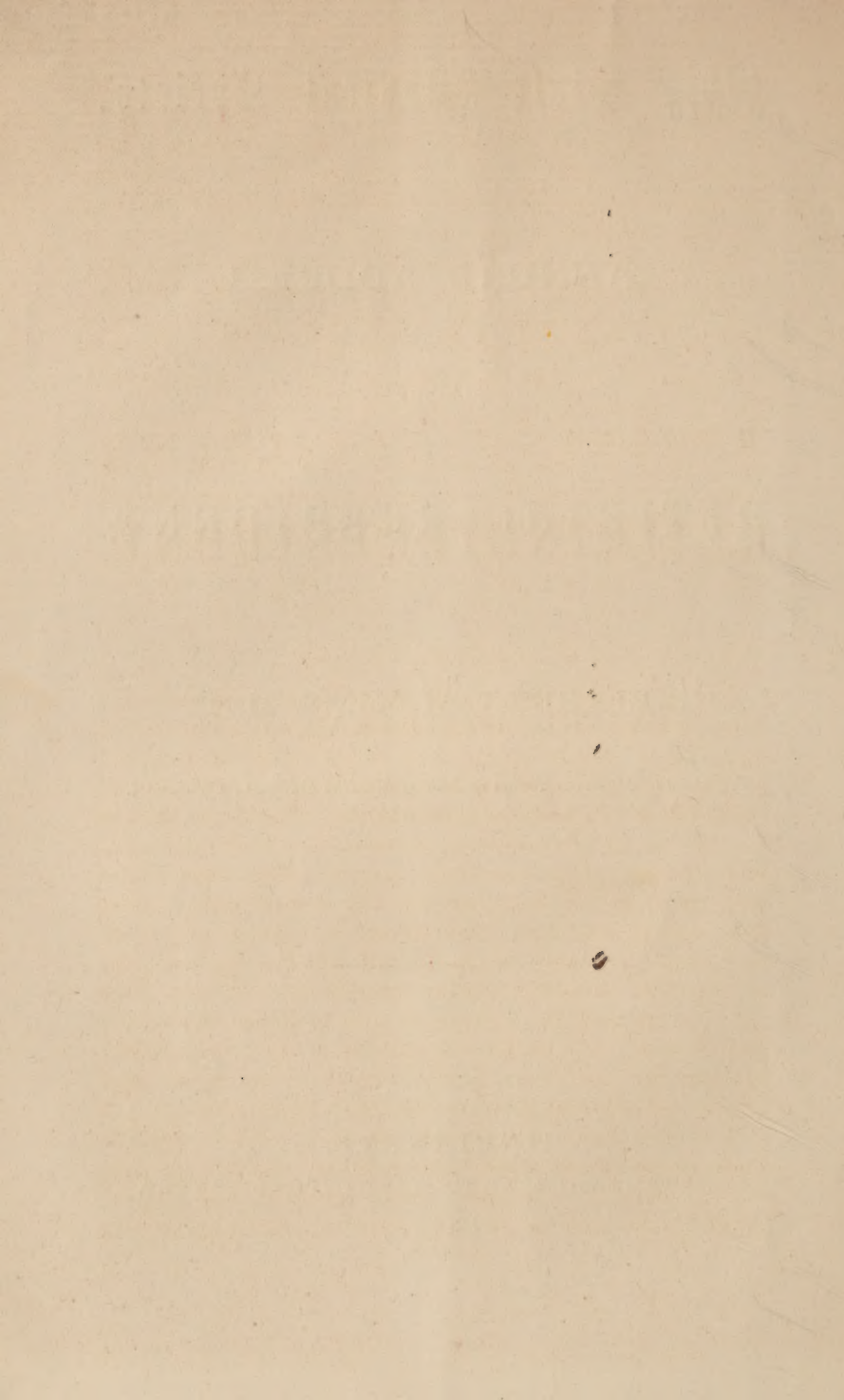
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ANNUAL ADDRESS
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Gentlemen of the Ohio State Medical Society:

Two sets of motives or conditions chiefly determine the character of human conduct—the results of individual human life.

Some men start out on the great journey with certain well defined purposes and aspirations. These propose to themselves the attainment of definite ends, and the accomplishment of positive material events. With them "faith and works" have a clearly understood relation to each other, they *anticipate* success, even though its cost be toil, hardship, and the sacrifice of ease. Such are the explorers, the toilers, and delvers. They are the discoverers; they show us new worlds; bring to us new thoughts; devise for us new plans. They are the artizans of the world's work shops! They are the men, who wield the levers of the social fabric, and continue the world in its social revolutions! A man of this class selects his pursuit in life, and determines upon all possible excellence, both for the sake of excellence and its uses. In this contest for success, severity of labor, watchfulness, waiting, be these ever so exacting, are as

nothing; the largest amount of positive results, and the completest earthly triumphs, are every thing.

Then we have another sort of men, who are, perhaps, the numerical majority; but they are not the rulers. For these there is *no motive power but necessity*. The grand stream of time hurries them away, perchance, in its all absorbing current; but with each little eddy they float into some safe and quiet bay of idleness and indifference. They find themselves placed in this world, from no fault or wish of their own, and they stupidly wait until eddies and currents shall have swept them out into that far away Ocean of Eternity, of which they have lazily dreamed, but *about* which none of the conduct of life has been, for their lean spirits, a prophecy or a preparation. Whatever of toil such men assume is but the forced exertion of the drudge at the treadmill, ever compelled to a monotonous labor, without hope of advance.

Do not these few words tell the constant story of the two great classes of human kind? One is the brave, thoughtful, earnest man; the other is the aimless, dreaming laggard. And is not this philosophy of the conditions, which give character to human pursuits, or human society, peculiarly true, my friends of the profession of medicine?

Many of us, I trust, feel that our chief pride is to be regarded as *devoted* to our profession; many of us, I fear, are only *attachments* to our profession.

We enter upon the great drama of life, and there is at once impressed upon us a necessity for labor. Varied pursuits, filled with attractive promises, are open before us, and each beckons an inviting hand, pointing out the path to fame, wealth, power, and all those dazzling allurements, that stir the pride of youthful blood and ambition.

Some men enter upon our divine art and sacred calling with the noblest ambition, the purest aspirations, and the holiest purposes; for these there is a field of worthy toil; not only toil—investigation, invention. The labors of professional life, with such men, are appropriated to developing its resources and contributing to its progress. In the record which such men make, by their lives, we read the

history of purposes accomplished. By virtue of their brain and sinew, the science and art of medicine has made substantial progress, has alleviated the sufferings of the world, and has lengthened the average span of human life.

But many men select medicine as the pursuit of life simply as an occupation, not a choice; there is of course no enthusiasm, and at the *best*, it is only to be made a means for the grossest temporal ends. With these all labor is of the most selfish character for the most selfish purposes. They are groveling idlers—otherwise than under the spur; indifferent to success; with no glorious hope of personal, or professional immortality. With such impulses how we drag behind the train of our progressive science! What drones we become in the professional hive!

We have the earnest man, then, and the laggard, in medicine, as in all the callings of life; each impresses his own peculiar character, upon both the professional and social structure; one of antagonism, perhaps, yet an impress.

Nevertheless, no human calling has so wide a range of usefulness as medicine; no pursuit demands so large a share of disinterested self-sacrifice and personal devotion; none call for such a variety of brain and physical exertion as that of the TRUE PHYSICIAN.

Permit me, just here, to read to you a few paragraphs from a tribute, recently made to us by an eminent clergyman:

“‘Luke the beloved physician.’ Thus the Divine Word characterizes the only individual of this profession, of which it speaks. Next to the minister, *often beyond the minister*, is the doctor a household favorite. If he has been with us amid much of pain and peril, a deep and ineradicable gratitude is associated with his name, and his benignant appearance. There have been times, perhaps, when in our helplessness, we have regarded him as the only arm strong and skillful enough to parry the blows that death was aiming at some object of our affections. We have watched the struggle with varying hopes and intense solicitude; but when victory turned on the side of the doctor, we could

have laid down our fortune at his feet, for the service he had rendered us.

"The doctor comes to our sick room day after day; he heeds the summons at night as cheerfully and promptly as if it were no pain to rise from bed, and go out into the dark, damp, cold, cheerless streets, and into the chamber of suffering. No hour is his own. Neither sanctuary, lecture-room, parlor, study, nor dining-room, is free from the imperative call. The darker the night, the more howling the storm, the more likely some hypochondriac will be to fancy that he is just about to die, and the attendant must be summoned. Such is this profession; in it no rest is possible. Pain, pestilence, dying, are its constant attendants.

"This profession is distinguished, too, by its extensive charities. As a body, physicians attend as cheerfully upon the poor as upon the rich. Where it is absolutely certain there can be no remuneration, still they are as constantly watching and prescribing.

"The tone of this profession, is nobly above the sordidness of most other pursuits in life. It bases itself and buries itself in the humanity of its calling. It regards itself as set for the alleviation of human suffering and the preservation of human life. The noblest manifestation of this, is in the principle so universally accepted by the profession, that *there should be no secret medicines*."*

Such is a part of the grateful and appreciative tribute, which a noble minister of the Gospel, has thought right to bestow on physicians; a tribute, we would fain hope, is truthfully applicable to us as a whole profession; a tribute so grateful and kindly, indeed, that we can not but regard it as, in a large degree, an offset to complaints, chargeable to our clerical friends, in which we have, now and then, indulged. We thank our friend, therefore, for speaking so well of us, and the more boldly proceed further to express our own idea of our calling—ITS WORTH, ITS UNITY, and our mission in its behalf.

For myself, then, I do not hesitate to pronounce MEDICINE

* Rev. Dr. J. M. Reid, Editor W. C. Advocate, March 11, 1868.

the grandest and widest of all human pursuits. When we grasp the extent of both heart and intellect demanded—I can make no exception. Let me ask you but to *think* for a moment what the good physician is, what is embraced in his requirements, and what we mean by the unity of his art.

The cunning artizan wields his knowledge of intricate mechanism to our delight and wonder. His creative genius endows him with powers almost beyond humanity. The world honors their exercise by pouring into his lap, a rich garner of such wealth as is fitly deemed the sweet end and reward of toil.

To the man of law—in the high and honorable estimate we have for this sister profession—there is a broad and earnest field of culture. Take it for all it implies, and success means a large share of earthly glory, won by brains, toil, and fidelity. Mark the dry details of fact, law, and precedent; all these based upon the true knowledge of the eternal principles of truth and right. Mark the subtle investigation of testimony; the sifting of evidence; the shrewd winnowing of the chaff of falsehood, from the sound grains of truth; mark the triumphs of the forum! Eloquence in its spell has borne away our hearts and our judgements. Guilt in all its hideous deformity, cowers in rage, and shrinks from observation; while the tear drops of grateful *innocence* tremble in the fullness of a newborn joy.

Or take that other, who just now storms the hearts of an impetuous people—the successful chieftain. Marching out at the head of a column on holiday parade, or in the elegant pomp of review—and the soldier is only the creature of the military tailor. But when he has stemmed the tide of a stormy battle, or directed a siege, or planned a brilliant campaign, and displayed those qualities of intellect and courage, which characterize the successful General, then he becomes at once the people's hero and idol. What a sight is that of the Marshal Wellington, quietly, calmly watching the events of that terrible battle-field of Waterloo; counting off the slowly passing seconds, until Old Blucher's sturdy

battallions wheel grandly into line, solve the problem of the day, and settle with their thunders the history of Europe for half a century.

Or how does the heart bound, and every pulse throb and tremble, as we read our own story of that fight, panic, rout—and then renewed victory—down the Valley of the Shenandoah, when, as the painter poet tells it:

“*** louder yet into Winchester rolled,
The roar of that red sea, uncontrolled,
Making the blood of the listener cold,
As he thought of the stake in that fiery fray,
With Sheridan twenty miles away.”

and how wonderfully do we seem to appreciate the magnetism of a great leader, whose presence compels victory, in the direst extremity, when he tells us:

“The first that the General saw were the groups
Of stragglers, and then the retreating troops.
What was done? what to do? a glance told both,
Then striking his spurs, with a terrible oath,
He dashed down the line 'mid a storm of huzzas,
And the wave of retreat, checked its course there, because
The sight of the master compelled it to pause.”

I have yet one more; but how shall I sufficiently portray the exalted character, and mission of the Messenger of God! How can I speak with sufficient affection and reverence, of so noble and privileged a person! No word painting of mine can do justice to his calling; of how patiently he bears with the waywardness of the foolish sinner; of how tenderly he whispers the loving messages of his Divine Master; of how he visits the haunts of wretchedness, and want, and vice, imitating his Master—“eating with publicans and sinners;” threading lonely ways, and hunting out poverty-stricken tenements; all these self-sacrifices, if necessary, to-day, are made, even while to-morrow he may stand in the pulpit, and visit upon gilded sin the eloquent denunciations of a sincere and terribly earnest heart. He comes to all of us with his sacred mission. In health, he warns us of faith

duty, and good words meet for repentance. Sick and dying he comes to our poor trembling hearts, with the story of the cross, and words of hope.

* * * * * And yet all of these—glorious creations though they are—are still limited in their sphere, both of action and intellectual development; while the *True Physician* must enter upon his mission with something of the attributes of all. No narrow field bounds his vision. His complete culture calls for the education of every faculty—of head, and heart, and hand.

The most cunning handicraft of the artizan should be his; the wise use of appliances—their nice adjustment; the laws of mechanism, all show the man of genius, and skill in medicine as in art.

In the study of diseases in their mysterious complications, the subtle investigations which come up, demand a legal mind of the finest order; how do these put to shame legal quibbles, and points of precedent and conflicting evidence; and what a glorious orator is he, who having won in the silent contest with death, pronounces the words, which restores a father, or a beloved child, to aching anxious hearts! "restores a light, a joy, perhaps a head to the household." The tears of gratitude at such a time are sweeter to the true soul than all the hosannas which swell from the multitude with the proudest triumphs of the forum.

We read that among the old Romans, the word *virtue* was simply a synonym for personal courage; and amid the rudeness of that warlike people, they had a *mural crown* for him, who should first scale the walls of an enemy's city; but far above all *mural crowns*, even with this rough and military people, was the *civic crown*—granted to him, whose personal bravery, saved a life!—ours be the *civic crown*!

And then, in this fight with disease and battle with death, the physician arranges the forces he will bring to bear—both of vitality and therapeutics—with all the care that the skillful General employs when he studies the map of a fortress, and determines the details of a siege, or the plan of a campaign.

Finally, the good doctor is himself a constant preacher of righteousness! Our Blessed Savior appears to us in no more attractive character, than when he is described as the Great Physician—the Healer both of the soul and the body. And Christlike, the True Physician finds occasion to give a word of exhortation, to speak a message, *to look a thought*, to comfort some poor dying mortal, even while his best energies are directed to those means, remedies, resources, which the skill of our art may suggest to bring back the ebbing life current, or stay the vital spark.

How various, then, the development of the mind and heart which the profession of medicine requires! All human experience, art, the lessons of history, all earthly resources, are made to contribute to the outfit, and demanded for the culture of the *True Physician*. Who of us is equal for the task, which is laid upon us. With such responsibility for the performance of duty

“What manner of men ought we to be.”

Yet with such singular and varied requirements—suggesting such diverse elements—how wonderfully do they blend to make up for our admiration, the harmonious proportions of the complete structure. For the elements of its edifice, medicine looks to the ends of the earth; but there is no discord; their aggregate is the sum which makes for us the *Unity of Medicine*.

Let us very briefly look at these elements of necessary culture in detail.

Manifestly, first of all, no man will presume to take charge of strange machinery or undertake its repair. First, and wisely, he makes himself familiar with its construction. Accidents may occur about the skillful engineer, a crash on this hand, a steam jet burst out on that, but cool, with no anxiety, or embarrassment, he proceeds to his task of repair, for he knows every wheel, and pinion, and lever, exactly where they belong, and the offices they are expected to perform.

How much more should we study the structure of this di-

vine microcosm! This mysterious soul and body called man, before we vainly presume to enter upon its cure, or undertake the repair of those accidents which continually happen in its intricate and wonderful mechanism. But, strangely enough, this most important of all those studies, which are the very foundation of medical knowledge, has from the earliest times been prosecuted under the greatest difficulties. And even to the present time old prejudices so hang about us that the pursuit of anatomical studies must still be prosecuted for the most part by stealth! Almost of necessity in violation of established legal enactments!

One of the most accomplished physicians of our country, once speaking of the discoveries of MONDINO of Bologna, of VESALIUS, and HARVEY, suggested very forcibly, that "There can be little doubt, that if anatomy had been cultivated in ancient times, as it is at the present day, medicine would now have been many centuries in advance of its present position. The nature of diseases, their causes and their remedies, would all have been far better known, and the human race would have reached a much higher point of civilization than at present. So vast and so enduring is the mischief which an irrational prejudice has inflicted."*

When, however, we have traced the minute structure of man, the framework, with its complex but beautiful hinges and joints, the delicate tissues of structure, the heart with its pumps, and valves, and arterial branches, the brain, and its lines of telegraphic tendrils, all these and much more of this cunningly wrought body; *then*, springing up, as it were, from this anatomical study, develops another science if possible still more beautiful and interesting. We have first the *structure* of this mechanism; next we have the *laws*, the *plans*, upon which its movements depend. Herein is suggested to us, the idea of *life*, which is the wonderful force—the motive power of the whole.

Physiology as a science, then, depends upon Anatomy. Its existence is scarcely possible without it. The discovery of the circulation of the blood, and the demonstration of

* Address of Prof. Stille.

the nature of lymph, were probably at the very threshold of physiology; but then passing rapidly from one important point to another, we come, finally, to our present notions of that ultimate germ, the *cell*. Then curiously blended with all our conceptions of *life*, is our knowledge of the functions of the nervous system. Still, again, watching the curious and beautiful process, by which food is carried out from the stomach, and gradually becomes converted into blood, and the various tissues of the human structure, we come to that wonderful inquiry of *how bread becomes flesh?* The solution of some of these intricate problems requires that other branches of science be made tributary. Thus the knowledge and use of the *Microscope* bears its valued testimony, while many sturdy barriers have been broken down, by the teachings of *Chemistry*. Thus, step by step, the mystic curtains are drawn aside; and what vast, magnificent, and truly beautiful spectacles, fill the eye! Already, then, we have made necessary for our culture, four distinct branches of knowledge, either of which may worthily occupy the best moments of a life time; while at this point we have scarcely passed beyond the threshold. We have next to become familiar with all those accidents to which this body, as a material machine, is liable, as well also those of that glorious spiritual nature which it encases. We have accidents of violence, accidents due to the wear of age, accidents of disease, in all its subtle guise. Such necessities and inquiries bring us to those great studies of *Pathology*, both *Medical* and *Surgical*.

Then there are needed implements for our toil; the *tools* necessary for the various repairs that accidents require. On the one hand, we have surgical appliances and instruments, whose mechanism and proper uses are to be learned; on the other, we have various curative agencies and remedies, medicinal and otherwise. What an extended and beautiful study is afforded in the varied properties of the *Materia Medica*. The Chemistry of Drugs, their reactions, their pharmacy, their botany. The therapeutic value of heat and light, the curative influence of music, beautiful scenery, and

happy emotions. With what magnificent proportions the subject opens before us! Now we begin to note what varied branches of human knowledge are each independently requisite, and, yet, how curiously they interlace with each other, and how happily these diverse studies go to make up one harmonious whole; how wonderfully these scattered elements construct for us that which I have spoken of to you as the *Unity of Medicine*.

Another thought in this connection is not to be rudely rejected. We have, indeed, these elements or factors, which go to the construction of the accomplished physician. They are the substantial materials of which the stately edifice takes its complete proportions and outline. But as the man of taste will constantly find new adornments to his home and his grounds, be they ever so carefully devised, so, too, our art and science is ever receiving new outgrowths; not, indeed, as mere ornaments, for the useful and the beautiful are not always in conflict—and the continued development and progress of medicine, *add* to its harmonious completeness.

The devotees of medicine are often eccentric; we hammer away at the anvil, and forge new thoughts, new theories of life, new plans of treatment, entire new systems of doctrine; this is happening every day, and we are often thereby disagreeably disturbed in our positions; but after all, this agitation has its uses. Much of all this is sham, perhaps, and I certainly have no purpose, ever so remote, to indorse deceit or quackery; but after all, the false is soon forgotten—it lives its feeble day, and disappears forever. The grains of truth, meanwhile, are, by and by, winnowed from the heaps of husks and chaff, and insensibly we adopt them, learn to love them, and they become part of the living, perpetuated system of our accepted doctrines.

* * * * Such, my friends, is in some sort, my idea of medicine as one of the callings of life, its character and its unity. I know how feebly I have portrayed its features, and yet many—not of us—will doubtless think I take this occasion to “magnify mine office,” and make tints of too bright

a hue. Such as it is, however, gentlemen of the Ohio State Medical Society, it is the calling of our lives, our choice, our affection, and we have come up together for the promotion and protection of its best interests.

As individuals we labor in the same direction, and for the same purposes; in a variety of ways we are to do honor to our profession; individually it is for us to excel in the knowledge of the science and practice of the art; *individually* it is for us to cultivate personal virtues, and personal purity of character; individually it is for us, by these and all honorable arts, to compel a high esteem and affection on the part of the community for the profession we pursue.

As an Association we do not loose sight of these individual aims and purposes; we work for them simply in other modes—modes in which *union lends strength*. More than twenty years ago those revered men who founded this Society, expressed our objects to be:

* * * * * “the association of the profession for mutual recognition and fellowship; the maintenance of union, harmony, and good government among its members, thus promoting the character, interests, honor, and usefulness of the profession; the cultivation of medical science, and literature, and the elevation of the standard of professional education.”—*Art. II. of the Constitution*.

These motives for our organization are as worthy now as they always have been, and I trust we shall ever be animated by the high ambition of cultivating good fellowship, union, and good government among ourselves, and promoting science and all the great interests of our calling.

But, I am happy to think, these objects do not by any means fully express the mission of good works in which we have engaged as a Society in the part, or toward which the influence of the medical profession will continue to be exerted. I am happy to think that some of the most important benevolent enterprises of our State, owe their immediate existence to the influence of the Ohio State Medical Society. Personally I have but little faith in any legislation in behalf of medicine. Many good men feel otherwise, as I

am aware, but for myself I do not desire it. Nevertheless, there is much of the legislation of the State in which it is our province and duty to be *felt*, not for ourselves, but for the good of the people.

The existence and proper management of Hospitals, and Infirmarys, and Asylums, with many other institutions for the comfort and health of the community, need and receive our fostering care and faithful sympathy. We must continue to work in these directions. The hygiene of our people, the nature of epidemics and plagues, the care of the insane and feeble-minded, the health of towns and cities, the influence of climate, and the influence of various occupations and pursuits in life, these all demand our watchful care, and are objects which naturally spring from our organization and the nature of our pursuits, both personal and social. Then, too, in a thousand ways as we promote the interests of our profession, in the same degree we advance the comfort, health, morals, and well-being of the Commonwealth.

These, after a meager fashion, indicate the directions of professional labor. And that we may wisely fill up the measure of this, our mission, as a Society, and as professional men, we must live *fast* and *well*. Such a mission needs earnest work; for us there are no spare hours to idle away. If we live otherwise, it scarce needs that we had lived at all.

"We live in deeds, not years—in thoughts, not breath;

In feelings, not in figures on a dial.

We should count lives by heart throbs.

He most lives—

Who *thinks* most, *feels* the noblest, *acts* the best."

